

Gartner: Less Customers Plan to Buy Tablets

Written by Marco Attard
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According to Gartner less customers in mature markets are thinking of buying a tablet in the next 12 months-- in fact, just 17% of survey respondents plan to do so, and such numbers will only fall in 2016.



The survey covers 19000 consumers in the US, UK, France, China, Brazil and India, and shows less than 1 in 5 users in mature markets plan to purchase or upgrade a tablet.

"Unless new compelling innovation or incentives to upgrade tablets are created, the churn of the mature installed base will continue to fall," the analyst says. "The worst-case scenario is that many tablet users will never upgrade or buy a new tablet as phablets and/or two-in-one convertible PCs (both with larger screen) envelop the benefits of a tablet. This scenario would result in real household penetration for tablets falling under 40% in mature markets."

One reason customers in mature markets fail to upgrade tablets is a lack of compelling software reason to do so. Most apps work well enough on 1st and 2nd generation tablets, and free OS updates ensure such devices remain, well, up to date.

Customers in emerging markets face other problems-- tablets in such markets need to complement smartphones, but limited wifi connectivity and the expenses of cellular-connected tablets mean budget-constrained users prefer to buy an entry-level 5.5-inch (or larger) phablet to combine the benefits of smartphone and tablet.

Another survey finding is 48% of respondents do not want to replace a device unless absolutely necessary. Interestingly, around 50% plan to remain loyal to current form factors, especially

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desktop (65%) and laptop (46%) PCs, marking an opportunity in customers uncertain whether current devices can satisfy increasingly complicated needs.

"Opportunities appear in the form of hybrids. Demand for this two-in-one form factor is generated by tablet owners and standard laptop users. The dissatisfaction with standard laptops comes from issues around battery life, weight and boot up times. Others see the versatility of a hybrid meeting the needs of a tablet and a notebook, especially with the benefit of a keyboard," Gartner concludes. "It appears the traditional PC is no longer a compromised device compared with tablets or even smartphones and appeals to consumers in a new, more versatile form factor."

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